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ABSTRACT

A study highlighted the extent to which TV news directors and subordinates perceived negative reinforcement to be used to help establish working climate in their newsrooms, and examined the differences in their perceptions that working climate affects personal ability to do "best" work on the job. Twenty news directors and 40 subordinates from TV newsrooms randomly selected in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah were surveyed for their perception of negative reinforcement techniques in use, and their ability to do best work within the working climate established. Rankings to statements involving perceptions of interpersonal communication, job satisfaction, and program ratings were obtained for ancillary data, and response means and standard deviation were determined. Results indicated that news directors overwhelmingly reported use of negative reinforcement, and reported less ability to do "best work" on the job. Results also showed that subordinates reported greater perception of negative reinforcement in use, but reported better interpersonal relationships and more job security than that perceived by news directors. Students and scholars of organizational communication will welcome this useful study of employee attitudes, and further research should concentrate on confirming the existence of negative reinforcement in TV newsrooms nationally. (One hundred twenty-six references and six appendixes including survey instruments and statistics are attached.) (Author/PRA)

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THE USE OF NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF TELEVISION NEWSROOMS IN THE SOUTHWESTERN U. S.

A Thesis

Presented to the Graduate Faculty

of Communicative Arts & Sciences

Eastern New Mexico University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree Master of Arts

by

Douglas J. Swanson

July 18, 1991

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by

Douglas J. Swanson

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THE USE OF
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Chairman: Dr. Tim Ashmore

This study highlights the extent to which TV news directors and subordinates perceived negative reinforcement used to help establish working climate in their newsrooms. It examines the differences in their perceptions that working climate affects personal ability to do "best" work on the job.

Twenty news directors and 40 subordinates from TV newsrooms randomly selected in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah were surveyed. Participants ranked their perception of negative reinforcement techniques in use, and their perception of ability to do "best" work within the working climate established. Rankings to statements involving perceptions of interpersonal communication, job satisfaction, and program ratings were obtained for ancillary data.

Response means and standard deviation were determined. News directors overwhelmingly reported use of negative reinforcement. They reported less ability to do "best work" on the job. Subordinates reported greater perception of negative reinforcement in use, but reported better interpersonal relationships and more job security than that perceived by news directors. Statistical tests were conducted at the .99 confidence level.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The importance of the locally-produced television newscast as an information disseminating medium is well documented. Televised news reports allow citizens to be informed about events of interest and importance to them. The local television newscast allows criminal justice matters, political action, civic functions, sports, weather and entertainment to become a part of virtually every home--and a topic of conversation in every community.

It is fairly easy to determine who watches local news--and why they are interested in what it has to offer (Webster and Newton, 1988; McDonald and Reese, 1987). Specifically, however, research by Wulfemeyer (1983) found that viewers seek a level of "quality" to the local news broadcasts they watch. They seek out broadcasts which they feel most accurately and professionally represent events of the community in which they live.

As a consequence of these viewers watching a particular news broadcast, the television station is able to determine its 'rating' for the time period. The 'rating' is a statistical approximation of the number of people watching during the given period, along with estimates of the demographics of the viewers. Station management examines this information to make estimates of the viewers' likelihood of purchasing products and services sold

by advertisers buying broadcast time from the station during the time period.

Strong ratings are vital to the success of a TV news operation, to the extent that ". . . [P]rices agencies and their clients pay for advertising are based on ratings" (McIntyre, 1985, p. 1). McIntyre points out that the loss of one ratings point in a local television news program in the Pittsburgh market, for example, can lessen the value of a 30-second spot by an average of $100. Ratings also have been related to the audience's perception of newscast credibility in that local news is seen by many people as "the most important single piece of programming" on television (Meyers, 1982, pp. 73-87).

Existing literature has thoroughly documented obvious variables that result in viewers watching or not watching a particular TV newscast. These include lead-in show effectiveness, anchorperson attractiveness, use of graphics, and use of "live action" video. But one variable which the author believes has marked influence in the creation of local television news has not been thoroughly investigated. There is no research on record which examines which examines the existence of negative reinforcement as an influence on behavior in the television newsroom, and the effect it would have on employees' perceptions of the workplace and their contributions within it.

This possible existence of negative reinforcement in the organizational climate is significant in a number of ways. Not only can negative reinforcement itself be perceived as a

communicative effort, but it can affect other communicative efforts within the newsroom.

On a basic level, Samovar and Porter (1991, p. 7) found people need to interact with others. "[T]his need is met through the act of communication, which unites otherwise isolated individuals. Our behaviors become messages to which other people may respond."

Frequently, verbal interaction is part of this process. Verbal interaction can be conceptualized as a process initiated by a sender utilizing the elements of linguistic code, message context, and message meaning. The linguistic code is the system of symbols used in communicating with others in the language chosen. The symbols chosen facilitate the transmission of a message, help exert social control over the participants, and help guide the recipient of the communication in formulation of a response (Samovar & Porter, 1991; Fisher, 1978).

The message context "determines everything about the nature of the communication" (Hall, 1976, p. 94). A high-context message is one in which very little of the actual message content is explicitly stated. Instead, it is found in the physical context or internalized in the participants in the communication act. A low-context message is one in which the majority of the information is found in the coded message.

Message meaning refers to the definition of the symbols which the sender of the communication wishes the receiver to determine. The perception of meaning is dependent upon the

symbols used, pattern of symbols, context applied, and a plethora of other variables which change with each communicative encounter (Fisher, 1978). The recipient of the communication must "grasp the facts and the feelings" in order to attempt to understand the intent of the message (Rogers and Farson, 1979, p. 168).

This points out the critical "other half" of the interpersonal communication exchange--that of the intended recipient. One cannot successfully interpret communicative acts without the ability to measure and define the symbols, context, and message content. This ability is determined by one's personal perspective of the communicative act, which "provides for us the most fruitful conceptualization of reality for our purposes" (Fisher, 1978, p. 59). This perspective is based upon such variables as one's background, education, ethnicity, and cultural experiences (Samovar and Porter, 1991; Klopf, 1987).

Of course, the ability to discern meaning in the messages received is influenced by the recipient's ability to actively listen to the verbal messages and assimilate what is being transmitted--through both the code and the context of the remarks (Lucas, 1989; Rogers and Farson, 1987). Messages transmitted to a recipient are influenced by variables other than those found within the specific verbal content. These "nonverbal" elements can include characteristics of language outside of the words themselves, such as language dialect and structure. Other elements are the sender's body type, body posture, physical expression and display of emotion. In order for these variables

to be symbolic elements of the communicative act, Burgoon and Saine believe they must be socially shared signals, made public by a sender, and received by "an encoder who responds systematically to that code" (1978, p. 7).

Klopf looks at the perception process as that of selection of environmental elements to be perceived, organization of the elements into a framework for understanding, the attribution of meaning to the elements, and then action--or lack of action--based upon what our past experiences tell us should take place (1987, pp. 41-49). The human interpersonal communicative process is dynamic, in that the human participants engaging in it are constantly affected by the messages sent and received. Every person is changed every day by the messages he or she creates or encounters. The communicative process is interactive and irreversible. People communicate to one another--and these communications cannot be retrieved once they are sent. These communications take place within a "physical and social context" which establishes rules governing the interactions (Samovar and Porter, 1991, p. 10). Through the communicative process, we as humans structure our thought and create commonality of ideas and actions. In effect, we <u>learn</u> what methods are successful--and what methods are not successful--as we communicate with others to achieve the goals we wish to achieve. "[T]he system of communication is a tool, a progressive invention, whose improvements react upon mankind and alter the life of every individual and institution" (Cooley, 1962, p. 64).

The interpersonal setting is only one of several types of social organizational structures in which people participate. People also engage in communication with others in the small group setting, and with still larger numbers of people in an organizational setting. "In each case social interaction produces its own system of integrating behavior; and as this occurs, each of these levels of involvement acquires its own particular properties. Thus the character of a group or an organization is something different and apart from that of the individual members or the sum of those members" (Pfiffner and Sherwood, 1960, p. 49).

The small group communicative process includes the concepts of interpersonal communication--but in expanded measure. It involves the establishment of a working group of between three and a dozen people, engaged in working toward a common goal. A designated leader coordinates the group by assigning certain tasks, encouraging participation, leading discussion, and seeing that the designated goal is met (Lucas, 1989; Hanson, 1975). A variety of communicative efforts are employed.

Such groups often utilize Dewey's reflective-thinking method of problem solving, which entails clearly defining the problem at hand, analyzing the problem to determine its severity and causes, establishing criteria to guide in decision-making, generating potential solutions, and choosing the appropriate solution (Lucas, 1989). Certainly members of small groups utilize all the elements of the communicative process already delineated. But

the process is much more complex due to the larger number of individuals participating, the myriad of communicative relationships that result, and the need to concentrate group action toward a specific goal. In the small group, these elements add up to create the group's organizational climate. This climate is an indicator of the group members' ability to communicate ideas to each other effectively, act upon those ideas to create goals and objectives, and then move cohesively toward meeting those goals and objectives. Small groups which can do this are ones in which the organizational climate is seen as effective--in that the groups appear unified, growth-oriented, and goal-directed. Small groups which cannot make these goal-directed accomplishments are perceived as ineffective--in that they appear divided, not inclined toward growth, and unsure of the future will bring.

Communication within the structure of an organization is an even more complex concept. Much larger than the small group, an organization is defined as "a collection of people working together in a division of labor to achieve a common purpose" (Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn, 1982, p. 10). In this collection of people, communication can be seen as the transmittal of facts and information, as an exchange of needs and feelings, as a storytelling device, or as a "vehicle for influencing or manipulating others" (Bolman and Deal, 1984, p. 247). Communication can be any one or these--or all of these--depending upon how, where, when, and why it is interpreted.

As in the small group, there are differing interpretations of the communicative process, depending upon where one finds himself or herself in that process. The interpretations are brought about by the individual's perception of the organization's climate. This interpretation allows each individual to make judgements about the organization, based upon the impression he or she gathers from how the organization acts and reacts in its environment to further its aims. To understand how we as humans interpret an organization's climate, all the variables found in the interpersonal communicative process must be considered--multiplied in even greater measure due to the complexities of the organization, its people, their roles within the structure, and their individual and group goals set by the organization's hierarchy.

It is clear, however, that primary functions of communication within the organization would include helping managers make decisions that affect the organization and its output (Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn, 1982, p. 411), creating a "shared reality" that leads to planning, goal-setting, production, and analysis (Zalkind and Costello, 1979, p. 213), and fostering positive attitudes, opinions, and emotions about the organization--both inside and outside of its corporate structure (Murphy and Peck, 1976).

Through this process, organizational climate is formulated. This climate is moderated by the roles workers play, the cultural

values established and maintained by management, (Miller, 1988), and this "shared reality" of management and employee perceptions.

This organizational climate, when perceived as conducive to productivity, morale, and personal satisfaction, is one in which employees and managers feel actively involved in shaping their futures (Chelte, 1989), and feel that the work experience is pleasant and rewarding (McDaniel, 1987). Personal likes and goáls "match" with those of the organization (Steele and Jenks, 1977, p. 39).

Because of what we know about communication in general, it is very easy to see how it would be affected by the presence of negative reinforcement used to influence employee behaviors. Previous research has documented that negative reinforcement is perceived by those encountering it as an unattractive stimulus. It transmits very distinct messages about the workplace and peoples' contributions within it. Organizations in which negative reinforcement is used have been found to have climates which discourage employee initiative, ambition, and creativity. In these climates, employees can feel less competent to do their jobs. In television, where journalists uncover news ". . . where the editors tell them to look" (Whetmore, 1982, p. 247), such an environment might not be conducive to employees feeling that they are making their best effort at 'looking' for news, solving problems, and creating an effective product.

An effective survey of local TV newsroom management and subordinate personnel is needed, to determine whether negative

reinforcement is widely used. Such a survey would also allow for us to gauge the differing perceptions of its use and their resulting affects in the workplace.

Nature of the Problem

Research has found local TV news to be an important societal link. Viewers want to know what's going on in the world around them and how it affects their lives (Wulfemeyer, 1983). Social life mediates, and is mediated by, television (Lindlof, 1987). Though many variables determine how viewers choose one newscast over another (McDonald and Reese, 1987; Webster and Newton, 1988), Wulfemeyer (1983, p. 323) found viewers will select one local TV news program over another based upon their perception of "quality" in the broadcast.

While "quality" certainly has different meanings to different people, it has been associated with accuracy (McManus, 1990), and honesty (Katz, 1990). Others have associated it with thorough reporting (Pooley, 1989), and a shying away from news events of a more superficial nature ("Journalistic Improvement", 1988; "News Directors", 1988).

As viewers look for "quality" on TV, those in the TV business look for profitability. In recent years, the dollar value of advertising time sold in local television markets has risen dramatically. Projections indicate the billings of local

stations will continue to increase between 6 and 7% annually for the immediate future ("TV Business", 1989).

Yet, while ad revenues increase (Stone, 1987), so do costs of production and operation ("TV Groups", 1988). As these costs escalate, and as competition for station revenues heightens, broadcast news managers will find increasing need to use ratings as justification for continuing existing programs or starting new ones (Stone, 1987; Quaal and Brown, 1982). Ratings become the "burden of proof", as decisions on programming are based ". . . not necessarily on whether a program [is] good but on whether it would be 'popular,' as determined by numbers of people tuned in" (Quaal and Brown, p. 134).

In many markets, the margin for error is already slim. The Radio Television News Directors Association surveyed its members in 1987 and found most of the 314 responding television broadcasters reporting profitable newsrooms. But, while 77.1% reported making money, 11.5% were in the red, and 11.4% were just breaking even. Among stations in the top 25 markets in the nation, almost 40% were <u>not</u> profitable, ("RTNDA Station", 1988). Although profitability is desirable everywhere, it is in the top markets where profitability is most critical, since local newscasts there produce as much as 40% of a station's revenue (Boemer, 1987). A ratings difference of less than one point can mean a revenue difference of hundreds of thousands of dollars in a large market (Boemer, 1987; Pooley, 1989).

From a business standpoint alone, the incentive is strong for TV news managers to take every possible step, and have every ounce of knowledge available to them, to attract the greatest numbers of viewers to their programs.

Managing the Newsroom

The manager of a local television news operation certainly should be concerned with this somewhat amorphous situation--program "quality." But, at the same time, there is much more for the news director to be concerned with in his or her day-to-day life. While being the overseer of programming, the news director is also a full-fledged manager of people and resources in a business environment.

Stone's research into this aspect of the news director's responsibilities found, in 1973, news directors reported spending an average of 22% of their time on "managerial activities." By 1985, the figure had increased to 53% (1987, p. 747). Survey respondents were concerned by this shift in emphasis. One in four news directors said they might leave the business as a result of "working conditions." This leads Stone to conclude that ". . . [T]urnover . . . may pose a problem for the quality of broadcast journalism" (p. 749).

It follows then, that there is a need for research which will identify management strategies which are successful, in that they would lessen the burden for news directors and employees by improving the newsroom organizational climate, increasing productivity--and, consequently, improving the quality of the TV

programs produced. Everything boils down to a balance of satisfaction. News directors need to be satisfied that they have created an organizational climate which allows them and their employees to produce the best possible television news programs. News directors must be extrinsically satisfied, in that they receive the external rewards which they feel compensate them for the effort they have put out. They must be intrinsically satisfied, in that they feel the appropriate level of personal success and satisfaction for what they have accomplished. Employees, also, must be satisfied with the organizational climate, their ability to work effectively within it, and their ability to do work which is intrinsically and extrinsically satisfying to them. All must feel that they can work together in the organizational climate, working toward a common goal, without fear of having some other satisfier (intrinsic or extrinsic) put at risk as a consequence.

The Working Environment

The working environment of the broadcast newsroom has been mostly overlooked in mass communication literature, even though stimuli in non-broadcast workplaces have been studied. More than 60 years ago, Watson (1924, p. 15) theorized that ". . . [T]here is a response to every effective stimulus and that the response is immediate." Watson and other early theorists of behaviorism agreed on several tenets, summarized by Carpenter: there exists a functional relationship between humans and their environment; humans share some basic similarities in terms of behavior and

reaction to others' behaviors; humans are capable of a variety of forms of behavior in most situations; and, human behavior has an impact upon the environment and upon others within it (Carpenter, 1974). In other words, humans make certain perceptions about the environment in which they find themselves. Often, these perceptions are similar among people working together in the same place. People can choose to behave in any number of ways depending upon what actions they think would be appropriate given the situation in the environment and their past experiences; but, regardless of what behaviors an individual chooses, anything he or she does, or does not do, will impact others in the environment.

Behavioral Reinforcements

In his work on behavioral change in the workplace, Thompson writes that "from a profit point of view, what people say to each other and how they say it probably has more influence than any other kind of interaction in private industry. Verbal interactions can make or break a company" (Thompson, 1974, p. 19).

Skinner treats these interactions as reinforcements--either positive or negative. Positive reinforcements are those which add to the environment through management reward of the individual employee for behavior which is conducive to the organization's goals and objectives. A positive reinforcer is "any stimulus, the presentation of which strengthens the behavior on which it is made contingent" (Skinner, 1953, p. 185).

Negative reinforcers are instances where management engages in "disapproving" an employee's current or potential future behavior, report Axelrod and Apsche (1983, p. 17). Rachlin, describing the use of electrical stimulation as a behavior-inducing device in the laboratory, describes negative reinforcement in a more clinical sense. "An aversive stimulus is presented and the experimenter waits until the subject performs some act that the experimenter has specified in advance. When the act is performed, the aversive stimulus is removed" (1976, p. 140).

Negative Reinforcements Defined

Negative reinforcements in the workplace are elements such as those determined by past research to be used commonly by management--those serving in a supervisory (Ford, 1969) or administrative capacity (Rachlin, 1976). They are aversive stimuli presented to obtain specific, predetermined behaviors from workers. They would include, but not be limited to: Removal of something attractive to the employee from the environment (Skinner, 1953), addition of something unattractive to the employee in the environment (Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn, 1982), ignoring of desirable employee behaviors (Blessing, 1986), excessive criticism of employees (Luthans and Kreitner, 1975), improper or insincere praise (Matejka and Ashworth, 1987), the removal of support for desirable employee behaviors (Kiechel, 1989), a lack of support for desirable employee behaviors (Drory and Shamir, 1988), the addition of stress--or "an extra demand"--

to employees in a work environment (Veniga and Spradley, 1981, p. 16), or any one of a number of elements which have been found to add to the formulation of a "climate of fear" among workers (Steele and Jenks, 1977, p. 82). This "climate of fear" defines a working environment in which the employees are primarily uninformed about what the future holds, and what their roles in it will be. They find themselves 'waiting for the other shoe to drop.'

Use of Negative Reinforcement

Employees have been shown to react--or change their behaviors--when faced with negative reinforcement in the workplace. In instances where management removes desirable or attractive stimuli from the environment--such as management feedback for fine performance which is present initially, then disappears--Zivan found employees "often return to their old ways of doing things, producing products or services lacking the quality that could have been achieved" (Zivan, 1987, p. 52).

Addition of unattractive stimuli to the environment--such as the case where "the executive yells because yelling pays off" (Luthans and Kreitner, 1975, p. 117)--is effective at first, but in the long term works against the manager using it. When, for example, the boss first yells at his subordinates, the reinforcement results in employees ending undesirable behaviors. But, as negative reinforcement continues to be used, it no longer ends undesirable behaviors; rather, it drives them underground. Employees perceive their desire to behave in a way which upsets

the boss as a sign of independence from the boss' negative reinforcement that "will go unpunished as long as the boss is not around" (Luthans and Kreitner, p. 120).

Luthans and Kreitner contend there is no self-discipline or self-control associated with a primarily negative reinforcement environment (1975). When desirable employee behaviors are ignored, Blessing finds workers do not perceive the opportunity to grow in their personal job skills. Employees may choose to leave the organization, although "worse than support staffers who quit and leave are those who quit and stay. They won't take any initiative. They're not part of the team" (Blessing, 1986, p. 23). In this same regard, Drory and Shamir (1988) determined that lack of management support is "the major correlate of [job] burnout" (p. 441).

Negative reinforcement has been found to threaten personal performance effectiveness, inhibit organizational goal attainment, and permanently suppress behaviors involving "decision making, creativity, or problem solving" (Luthans and Kreitner, 1975, p. 121). The manager who negatively reinforces subordinates only motivates people while he or she is present in the work area. Once the manager leaves the work area, "the now unrestrained subordinates get the all-clear cue and control begins to break down" (Luthans and Kreitner, p. 122). Newsom, Favell, and Rincover (in Axelrod and Apsche, 1983) reported that such actions by management produce reactions such as fear, facial and postural adjustments, "imitative aggression", "elicited

aggression", escape, and avoidance in persons other than the direct recipient of the reinforcement (p. 292).

Matejka and Ashworth found that proper praise of employees is often overlooked by managers who rationalize that subordinates should not be praised for doing "what they are being paid to do" (1987, p. 22). They further conclude that when praise is given improperly--accompanied by a put-down or criticism--or insincerely--accompanied by incongruent body language--employees feel hurt, resentful, or seek other ways to get management's attention. Frequently, these "other ways" are destructive or contrary to the corporate goals.

Management support for desirable behaviors has been found to result in employee contentment and productivity. Removal of this support can, according to Kiechel, leave employees less likely to take the risks of innovation (1989).

Rasco links support for employees to the manager's survival in the environment. He writes that an individual's success as a manager "will ultimately be determined by his degree of success in identifying and correctly satisfying the motivational factors of his employees" (1987, p. 33).

The "Climate of Fear"

The overall effect on an organization, in which negative reinforcement is extensively used, is the "climate of fear" (Steele and Jenks, 1977, p. 83). In this regard, they propose that an organization's internal, working environment is like

weather, and that employees become conditioned to the "climate" present on the job.

Negative reinforcement can contribute to this "climate of fear" within a business. In an organization where it is used, employees can feel threatened "that they are in danger of losing something or of having some very undesirable event befall them if they do not "watch their steps'" (Steele and Jenks, 1977, p. 81). Consequences include decreases in employee performance, anxiety, regression to "safe" behaviors, "patterned, routine, procedure-oriented responses", less initiation of new activities, and "more regression to old solutions" (p. 86-87).

Likely Consequences of Negative Reinforcement in the TV Newsroom

The employee reactions to negative reinforcement illustrated in the research are opposite of what news directors and production managers seek to have exhibited by their employees. From the highest-paid anchorman to the lowest-paid tape editor, news employees are expected to express innovation, competency, character, and intelligence ("News Directors", 1988). Sobran feels they should demonstrate a personal "code of ethics" (1985, p. 55). Pattison believes TV news production workers should be creative and imaginative in their presentation of a medium "that allows the viewer to take a projected reality and make it his own" (1987, p. 298). Honesty and integrity are suggested as important personal attributes (Katz, 1990). McManus suggests "quality control" is an individual and a group effort (1990, p.

43). There's little doubt that "personal standards" of performance weigh heavily in the production of material to be televised (Smith and Becker, 1989, p. 794).

There can be other factors aside from environmental stimuli which could influence employees' perceptions about their workplace and their desire to do a good job. Employees could, for example, be so intrinsically motivated that no amount of outside influence could dissuade them from happiness on the job and stellar performance in the workplace (Bolman and Deal, 1984; Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn, 1982). But the research into negative reinforcement would suggest that a negative reinforcement presence in the workplace would strongly discourage employee satisfaction in a number of areas. No research has examined perceptions of negative reinforcement in the TV newsroom, or its influence on employees' perception of organizational climate and ability to do "best" work within it. For this reason, the author proposes to address these concerns.

Review of the Literature

Over the years, many researchers have studied television news. This research includes examination of the televised content of specific local news broadcasts (Pooley, 1989), the content of local news broadcasts in general (Pattison, 1987), and a comparison of the contents of local news programs between different markets (Sobran, 1985; Carroll, 1989). The impact of

television news scheduling and market characteristics on people's exposure to news has been researched (Webster and Newton, 1988), as has the audience's perception of "credibility" a local news program holds (Gaziano and McGrath, 1986). These studies, and others, contributed to the body of knowledge by examining the format, content, and technical aspects of local TV news and its importance to the viewing audience. But none looked at factors contributing to organizational climate as possible influences on the product produced.

Other research on television has been done from the inside looking out. News directors have been told to re-examine their product for honesty and accuracy (Katz, 1990; McManus, 1990), and to come up with new types of responses to traditional newsroom problems (Lavine and Wackman, 1988). Newsroom staff members have been studied to determine whether the news broadcasts aired reflect their personal standards (Smith and Becker, 1989). Newsroom staffers have been queried as to why they enjoy doing what they do--and what happens when they stop enjoying it (Quaal and Brown, 1982; Stone, 1987). Much of this research was aimed at identifying elements which contributed to journalistic accuracy and integrity.

The connection between ratings and revenues has been examined (McIntyre, 1985; Boemer, 1987), as has the connection between employee interpersonal communication and revenue production (Stearns, Hoffman, and Heide, 1987). This research looked at TV news from more of a profit-and-loss standpoint. But

again, no specific references were made to organizational climate.

Research into negative reinforcement and its use has examined on negative reinforcement as part of an overall individual behavior modification scheme (Thorndike, 1911; Watson, 1924; Skinner, 1953; Rachlin, 1976). Research has examined the damaging impact of negative reinforcement on employees' desire to succeed at work (Hertzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman, 1959; Thompson, 1974). Research has identified elements of negative reinforcement which affect administrative effectiveness (Luthans and Kreitner, 1975; Steele and Jenks, 1977). Tauber (1988) looked at the ways managers misunderstand negative reinforcement and its affects. Foxx examined negative reinforcement's use in the behavior training of mentally handicapped and autistic children. The basic finding of these studies was that, while negative reinforcement can result in behavioral change in some situations, its use over the long-term generally does not stabilize the behaviors sought.

The use of negative reinforcement and its effects on production have been examined. Veniga and Spradley found (1981) employees put under workplace stress through use of negative reinforcement seek only "to bring relief from the stress" (p. 18), although the means sought for this relief are not always conducive to organizational goals. Comparisons have been made between negative reinforcement in the workplace in the U.S. and in England, in which it was found that workers responded

differently to the use of certain types of behavioral reinforcements (Earley, 1986).

Allied issues involving the use of behavioral reinforcements have been looked at--both in the professional and general literature. Some researchers found positive reinforcement to increase productivity in the workplace (Ancona, 1989; Cope, 1988), some "myths" about positive reinforcement's effects were identified, showing it is not a cure-all for organizational problems (Ancona, 1989, p. 51). Different examples of positive reinforcers in the work setting have been noted (Szilagyi and Wallace, 1983; Strang, 1985; Zivan, 1987; Lorentzen, 1983). Some effects of positive reinforcement on increasing student productivity were identified (Van Sciver, 1983; Brady, 1985; Roetter, 1987; Kidd and Saudargas, 1988). The use of positive reinforcement to obtain specific task accomplishment was studied (Sattler and Betz, 1978; Hingsburger, 1986) as was positive reinforcement as reward for good behavior during dental procedures (Allen and Stokes, 1987).

Social scientists have studied the results of behavioral reinforcements in the workplace, including the degree of job satisfaction perceived by employees (Ash, 1972; Vanderslice, Rice, and Julian, 1987; Drory and Shamir, 1988; Bhagat and Allie, 1989; Bruce, 1989; Gattiker and Larwood, 1989; Grunig, 1990). The issues of workplace productivity have been dealt with, through investigation of what makes an effective manager (Blake and Mouton, 1964; Blake and Mouton, 1978), and an ineffective

manager (Thompson, Kirkham, and Dixon, 1985). Employees perceptions of levels of management effectiveness have been examined (Greenhaus and Gavin, 1972; Becker and Klimoski, 1989).

The importance of good morale as a positive influence on workplace climate and productivity has been documented (Pollock, 1987; Rasco, 1987; Kiechel, 1989; Koenigsberg, 1989; Roberts and Harris, 1989). The elements which contribute to employee creativity have been studied, in an attempt to isolate elements conducive to creativity (Balkin, 1990; Moore, 1990; Webster, 1990).

Researchers have studied organizational effectiveness and its ties to individual employee contentment and feelings of "involvement" (Patchen, 1970; Nelton, 1986; Sullivan and Wircenski, 1986; "Talking to the Silent Majority", 1988; Portis and Hill, 1989.) Extensive research has been dedicated to organizational climate and the factors that result in people feeling positively or negatively about the place where they learn (Baruk, 1987; McDaniel, 1987; Moran and Volkwein, 1988; Blendinger and Jones, 1989) or where they work (Miller, 1988; Chelte, 1989).

Managers in the workplace have been shown how to manage a productive work culture (Snyder, 1988), organize an effective work climate (Steele and Jenks, 1977), and prepare for what Harris and Harris term "the coming metaindustrial work culture" (Harris and Harris, 1983, p. 22). Studies have shown the importance of communication in the workplace (Blocklyn, 1988) and

successes of applying humor in the workplace to fight on-the-job stress (Vinton, 1989).

Indeed, there has been a lot of research into negative reinforcement, behavior modification, and related topics of job satisfaction, employee contentment and morale. But none examines the use of negative reinforcement as a contributing factor to perceptions of organizational climate in the television newsroom.

The only findings closely related to his topic of concern are those by Gaziano and Coulson, examining newspaper reporters' perceptions of "democratic" and "authoritarian" management styles (Gaziano and Coulson, 1987, p. 1). The study found journalists working for evening newspapers felt less connection with management, and perceived management as more "authoritarian" than those employees working for morning newspapers. The research did not address the use of negative reinforcement, and its findings are not applicable to the author's concerns.

Still, there is value in examining this earlier research, as it shows negative reinforcement used by management can alter employees' perceptions of organizational climate. The research shows negative reinforcement has a short-term affect on individual behaviors, but a long-term affect on overall work climate. This needs to be investigated in the local TV newsroom. We need to be able to quantify the extent of peoples' perceptions of negative reinforcement in the newsroom, the extent to which they are satisfied with the organizational climate there, and

perceptions of personal ability to do "best" work in this climate.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between TV news employees and managers in the southwestern U. S. in the way they perceive negative reinforcement as a factor in organizational climate in their newsrooms.

Hypothesis Two: There is no relationship between these TV news employees' and managers' perceptions of negative reinforcement and perceptions of organizational climate.

Hypothesis Three: There is no relationship between these TV news employees' and managers' perceptions of organizational climate and perceptions of their personal ability to perform on the job.

Justification

Because television has such a strong impact on society, it is important that we understand more about it and its effects. The local television newscast is one of the more immediate, personal ways in which TV influences people's lives. Through watching local news, viewers obtain information about people,

events, and locales that are within the immediate physical area and have an immediate potential impact on their lives.

The images viewers see depend upon the actions of the journalists who produce the programs. Their efforts and actions as news gatherers and presenters--working under the policies and with the guidance of their news director--create the creation of this televised reality.

Current research does not examine whether management uses negative reinforcement, and how extensive that use might be. It does not examine the perceptions of the use of negative reinforcement by management and subordinates. It does not consider whether perception differences could affect managers' and employees' perceptions of organizational climate. Nor does the existing research look at how differing perceptions of organizational climate affect peoples' ability to do their best work on the job.

The author's personal experiences have led him to believe that negative reinforcement may be common in broadcasting, as it is in other businesses. Through its use, managers may be introducing stimuli into the environment which employees perceive as unpleasant. As a consequence of the introduction of these stimuli, employees may feel unable to do their best possible work.

The point of this research is not to find fault with managers for using negative reinforcement, or with employees for working under negative reinforcement conditions. The author

seeks only to document the extent to which negative reinforcement strategies are used by television news managers, and the extent to which their use is perceived as an influencing factor in the environment of the local TV newsroom. Once this information is known, we can then begin to see a clearer picture of how people really work together--and what they think about their contribution to the local TV newscast.

The findings of this survey into the attitudes of local TV news employees in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah will allow for a greater understanding of what goes on not only inside television newsrooms of the southwest--but inside newsrooms elsewhere. It will allow us to see how management deals with subordinates, and how those employees perceive their relations with management.

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CHAPTER TWO

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

Contained in this chapter is a description of the subjects, the instruments, procedures for completion of the instruments, and the statistical analysis procedures for the survey.

Subject Stations

All operating television news organizations within of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah which met the following criteria were included in this research effort:

1) Station is located within one of the states of concern, and broadcasts its own regularly-scheduled news, public affairs/current events program (rather than just occasional special or serial broadcasts).

2) Station has a news director, and news producer, news anchor and news photographer for survey (duplication of subordinate roles acceptable).

Eligibility was determined through examination of the 1990 Broadcasting Yearbook and through conversation with news directors prior to survey (see Appendix A).

Subject Employees

Within this population of television stations, the following management and subordinates were identified for survey:

1) The news director, or other member of management who supervises the news operation. The news director is the policy-setter, and the person ultimately responsible for success or failure of the news organization and its product (Quaal and Brown, 1982). If a negative reinforcement environment is established, it is established under the news director's control, so his/her attitudes must be measured.

2) The morning news anchor, or other subordinate responsible for hosting a news/public affairs program which airs prior to noon. This member of subordinate staff works with editors, writers, and others involved in the production of news. The morning news anchor and other members of the early day staff typically work unusual hours, often coming in to work at 2 or 3 a.m. As justification for inclusion in the survey, the author points to the morning news anchor's unusual working hours, association with support staff, and perspective as being a visually "recognized" member of the local TV news operation as factors contributing to an important perception of newsroom attitudes which significantly contribute to the survey data. In any instance where no morning news program exists, the anchor of the first program to air during the day was sought for survey. In cases where there is more than one morning news program host, the host with the most seniority on staff was sought for survey.

3) The early evening news producer, or other employee responsible for producing a news/public affairs program which airs in the early evening. The producer is responsible for the

overall quality and accuracy of the broadcast bearing his/her name (Smith and Becker, 1989). Since the early evening broadcast is often seen as the hallmark of the operation's competence and ability (Katz, 1990), this individual works under tremendous pressure from management, product-producing staff (reporters, photographers, other producers) and product-support staff (salespeople, technicians, etc.). The opinions of the early evening news producer are important to this survey because this person works the day shift, interacting with almost a complete cross-section of the newsroom. This person has a job which involves bringing the contributions of all these people together to form a cohesive, "watchable" product. In instances of more than one early evening program broadcast, the individual responsible for the program airing at 6 p.m. or at the subsequent later time prior to 10 p.m. was sought for survey. In the case of more than one producer, the individual with the most seniority on staff was sought for survey.

4) The senior photographer, or other subordinate responsible for photographing news/public affairs events for broadcast. This individual has been chosen for survey because he/she has immediate and direct contact with those subordinates who leave the newsroom to do their work. The research has demonstrated how attitudes present inside the workplace can dramatically change once an employee is outside--and the boss is not watching (McManus, 1990; Drory and Shamir, 1988; Blessing, 1986). The senior photographer has a unique perspective, having seen first-

hand how workplace attitudes among photographers, reporters, and other field personnel are subject to change from those attitudes demonstrated 'inside'. Thus, the opinions of the most tenured photographer are critical to this survey.

Instruments

The author could find no satisfactory measurement instrument to gauge the use of behavioral reinforcements in a journalistic environment. Therefore, a survey instrument was modeled after two questionnaires used previously in research into job satisfaction. One of these earlier instruments is the Bruce questionnaire (1989, pp. 16-17), which sought data to establish whether employees had high or low "quality of work life." As defined by Bruce, "quality of work life" is a coordinated, deliberate program of activities emphasizing group participation in the work process, and strengthening communicative efforts to build motivation to work and satisfaction on the job. The Bruce definition does not deal specifically with behavioral reinforcements.

The other questionnaire used as a model instrument is the Ash survey to determine different levels of job satisfaction between members of differing ethnic groups (1972, pp. 211-213). The Ash questionnaire is based on the Smith, Kendall, and Hulin "job description index" (1969).

The author's questionnaires (Appendix B and C) have been adapted from these earlier instruments and designed with several aims in mind. They contain six questions related specifically to

negative reinforcement, allowing managers to indicate the extent to which it is used--and allowing employees to indicate the extent to which it is perceived as a factor affecting organizational climate. The questionnaires contain 18 statements which will gauge the extent to which managers' and employees' perceptions of organizational climate differ. Finally, the questionnaires contain one statement allowing for measurement of the extent to which managers and subordinates are satisfied on the job and doing what each perceives as his or her "best" work. Each respondent will rank agreement to the statements posed on a 1-to-5 scale, with "1" being "highly disagree" and "5" being "highly agree." Included in the management questionnaire is a final statement asking respondents to indicate whether their total viewing audience for news programs has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same size in the past 36 months (see Appendix D for completion instructions offered). The responses to this question will be dealt with in the discussion section of the thesis.

Procedures

The author consulted the 1990 Broadcasting Yearbook to obtain a list of television stations in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah. Stations not meeting the criteria for inclusion in the survey were disqualified. From the remainder, the author used random selection to place stations in order for survey by telephone.

The author telephoned news directors, informing each individual of the survey being undertaken (see Appendix E). Each news director was asked if he (or she) and the three designated subordinates would be willing to respond to the questionnaires. News directors who did not wish to respond were categorized as "unwilling." In cases where five telephone calls failed to result in contact with the news director, the station was categorized as "not available."

Following completion of the questionnaire by each news director, subordinate names were obtained--and contact efforts undertaken for each by telephone. Employees who did not wish to take part were categorized as "unwilling." Those not reached after five telephone calls were listed as "not available."

Two of the news directors, when contacted by telephone, asked to respond by mail--and have their employees do the same. In each case, the author prepared letters of introduction and survey questionnaires, and mailed them to the station. One of the two news directors, and two of her subordinates mailed back responses. Responses from the other news director and subordinates were not returned promptly (see Appendix E).

Statistics

This survey involved telephone contact with all qualified television stations in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, to survey news directors and subordinates. There are 40 television stations which met the criteria for survey. During the week of May 30, 1991--June 5, 1991, the author obtained

responses from 20 stations, or 50% of the total population. Management and subordinate responses to each statement were separated from each other. Groups means and standard deviation, were calculated. Response means for managers were compared with those for subordinates for each of the 25 statements , and t-tests were performed to determine whether the response means were significantly different at the .05 and .01 level (see Appendix F).

Management and subordinate responses to the six negative reinforcement statements (3, 4, 5, 8, 18, 19) were grouped together. Means and standard deviation were calculated. Response means for managers were compared with those for subordinates for the group of statements, and t-tests performed to determine whether the response means were significantly different at the .01 level. Management and subordinate responses to the statement dealing with their perception of ability to do "best" work in the organizational climate (24) were grouped together. Means and standard deviation were calculated. Response means for managers were compared with those for subordinates for the statement, and t-tests performed to determine whether the response means were significantly different at the .01 level (see Appendix F).

Expected Results

The author has only the literature and his past experience to relate to when making a statement about expected results. No similar research has been conducted before.

The review of the literature shows that negative reinforcement adversely affects organizational climate. This in turn can affect the way managers and employees communicate. If negative reinforcement is used extensively there should be discrepancies in managers' and subordinates' perceptions of organizational climate, communicative ability and perception of freedom to do their best work on the job.

The author has worked for a number of years as a broadcast journalist, and has witnessed negative reinforcement techniques used extensively. He has no reason to expect that his results will not show negative reinforcement used extensively by broadcast news managers, perceived in use by employees, and resulting in inter-organizational turmoil.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

This chapter begins with a review of the survey which was conducted to obtain the findings reported. It continues with an individual review of each null hypothesis, and the findings which allowed the rejection of the hypotheses. Finally, management and subordinate survey responses are profiled.

Survey

Telephone calls to qualified television stations were made May 30, 1991 to June 5, 1991--in an attempt to communicate with each station news director and obtain his or her participation in the survey. Each news director was asked to give permission for subordinates to participate, since the news director's response alone from a station was not sufficient to test the hypotheses. From these calls, an overall news director response rate of 50% was obtained. The rate varied by state. Forty percent of the news directors in Arizona responded, along with 63% of those in Colorado, 55% of those in New Mexico, and 67% of those in Utah.

The telephone survey yielded 21 complete responses from news directors. One was disqualified because the news director revealed afterward that he had no subordinates. Eleven news directors could not be reached to participate after five telephone calls. Six news directors did not wish to participate.

One news director was disqualified because his station's telephone was disconnected with no new listing available.

Any news director unwilling to answer by phone was allowed to participate by mail. Two news directors agreed to respond by mail and were sent copies of the questionnaire and instructions for completion (see Appendix D). One of these was returned and included with the survey data.

Subordinate participation in the survey was sought after an individual station news director's response was recorded. This reduced the potential number of participant subordinates from 120 to 60. As with news directors, the rate of actual participation varied by state, with 67% in Arizona, 47% in Colorado, 83% in New Mexico, and 44% in Utah. The overall response rate was 67%--or 40 employees in all.

All subordinate responses were complete. Thirty-eight responded by telephone. Two returned questionnaires mailed to them (as per the instructions of their news director). Seventeen employees could not be reached after five telephone attempts. Two employees were unwilling to participate. One employee received a survey form by mail but did not return it.

Through this survey, the author collected data to determine the validity of three null hypotheses:

> 1. There is no significant difference between TV news employees and managers in the southwestern U. S. in the way they perceive negative reinforcement as a factor in organizational climate in their newsrooms.

Subordinates reported greater perceived use of negative reinforcement as a factor in organizational climate in the

newsroom (M = 3.40) than news directors did (M = 2.91), t (18) = 8.29, $p < .01$. Null hypothesis one may be rejected, because subordinates did perceive negative reinforcement in use in the organizational climate at a greater level than that reported by news directors. Consequently, there was a significant difference in the way these two groups perceived organizational climate.

> 2. There is no relationship between these TV news employees' and managers' perceptions of negative reinforcement and perceptions of this organizational climate.

The mean scores from statements 3, 4, 5, 8, 18, and 19 resulted in news directors reporting greater perception that the organizational climate was "pleasant," (statement 10), (M = 3.65), than subordinates did (M = 3.17), t (24) = 2.67, $p < .05$. News directors reported a greater perception of what the working climate would be like "from one day to the next," (statement 18), (M = 3.25), than subordinates did (M = 2.82), t (24) = 2.39, $p < .05$. Null hypothesis two must be rejected because news directors, who report less perception of negative reinforcement as a factor in organizational climate, report more pleasant working conditions and more surety of what the day-to-day working climate will be like. There is a relationship between news directors' perceptions of negative reinforcement as a factor in organizational climate and their perceptions of the "pleasant" and stable conditions of that climate.

> 3. There is no relationship between these TV news employees' and managers' perceptions of organizational climate and perceptions of their personal ability to perform on the job.

Despite a reported greater overall satisfaction with work climate, news directors reported a greater perception that there were "unpleasant aspects" of the work environment which prevented them from doing their best quality work, (statement 24), (M = 3.70), than subordinates did (M = 3.07), t (24) = 3.50, $p < .01$. For that reason, null hypothesis three must be rejected. A relationship cannot be strictly established between news directors' perceptions of climate and perceptions of personal ability to do "best" work--nor can a relationship be established for subordinates' poor perception of climate and higher rankings for ability to do "best" work.

Participant Responses

This section describes the responses to the questionnaire. In cases where management and subordinates statements were identical, only one is listed. In cases where the statements differed, both are listed, with the management's listed first. Next, participant responses are summarized by group mean, with group standard deviation. A brief statement about the response is offered. Chapter four will present the interpretation of data.

Statement 1: "I know how my job fits in with other work in this organization." The news directors' mean was 4.65, indicating they "highly agreed" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.58714. Subordinates' mean was 4.40, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was

0.95542. News directors reported greater understanding of their roles within organizations surveyed.

Statement 2: "It's important to involve staff in discussion of our department's goals; their input is valuable"; "I am involved in discussion of department goals; my input is valuable." News directors ranked this statement significantly higher than employees, (.01), indicating news directors perceived more goal discussion than perceived by employees. The news directors' mean was 4.70, indicating they "highly agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.47016. The subordinates' mean was 3.65, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.2920.

Statement 3: "This is a TV newsroom--not a place for an unprepared employee to get a learning experience." Apparently, news directors feel strongly that they should not need to help employees develop job skills. The news directors' mean was 3.50, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.2773. Subordinates' mean was 3.22, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.3299.

Statement 4: "My employees are paid to do their best possible work, so I don't over-do it with praise"; "I am paid to do my best possible work, so my boss doesn't over-do it with praise." At a statistically significant level (.01), news directors perceived that they praise employees more in the workplace than that reported by employees. The news directors' mean was 2.15, indicating they "somewhat disagree" with the

statement. Standard deviation was 0.98809. Subordinates' mean was 3.52, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.84694.

Statement 5: "When I want something done a certain way, I need not explain why because I am the boss"; "When my boss wants something done a certain way, it's my job to do it that way without question." At a statistically significant level (.01), employees perceived more of a need to perform their jobs without asking questions, as they had a mean of 3.72, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement, as compared with that of 2.50 for news directors, indicating they "somewhat disagree" with the statement. News directors may have felt they actually do a lot of explaining of on-the-job expectations. Standard deviation was 0.84694 for employees, and 1.2773 for news directors.

Statement 6: "Employees' expectations of my work are fair"; "Management's expectations of my work are fair." Employees had a greater perception that management made fair expectations of their work output, as their mean was 4.27, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement, compared with 3.70 for news directors, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. News directors' standard deviation was 0.65965; subordinates' standard deviation was 0.71568.

Statement 7: "I get lots of attention from my employees for my work"; "I get lots attention from my boss for my work." News directors' perceived getting less attention for the work they do, with a mean of 3.10, indicating they "agree" with the statement.

Standard deviation was 1.1653. Subordinates perceived more attention for their work, with a mean of 3.47, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.0857.

Statement 8: "When an employee behaves in an unacceptable manner, it's ok to 'call them on the carpet' in front of others so those behaviors won't be repeated by anyone"; "When an employee behaves in an unacceptable manner, the boss will 'call them on the carpet' in front of others so those behaviors won't be repeated by anyone." This prime example of negative reinforcement was reported more by employees than news directors. Subordinates' mean response was 3.20, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.3625. News directors' mean response was 2.90, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.8035.

Statement 9: "My employees are friendly toward me"; "My boss is friendly toward me." The news directors' mean was 4.25, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.71635. Subordinates' mean was 4.02, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.0975.

Statement 10: "The working environment here is pleasant and stress-free." Subordinates felt more stress, ranking this statement with a mean of 3.17, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.1742. News directors' mean was 3.65, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.81273.

Statement 11: "I am proud to work for this company." All respondents were proud--though news directors were slightly more so, with a mean of 4.20, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.95145. Subordinates ranked their level of pride at a mean was 4.17, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.93060.

Statement 12: "The people I work with all get along well." At the .01 level of significance, news directors perceived better interpersonal relationships in the newsroom than subordinates did, giving a mean ranking of 3.90, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. The standard deviation was 0.91191. The subordinates' mean was 3.12, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.4176.

Statement 13: "Employees bring their problems and conflicts to me so that I can deal with them promptly"; "Employees bring their problems and conflicts to the boss so they can be dealt with promptly." A significant (.01) perception disparity was noted in responses to this statement. While the mean for management's responses was 3.45, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.94451. Subordinates' response mean was 2.87, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.3046.

Statement 14: "My department functions as a team." Teamwork is perceived about equally by management and subordinates. The mean for news director responses was 3.75,

indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.2513. Subordinate responses showed a mean was 3.77, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.0739.

Statement 15: "I have lots of freedom on the job to use my own judgement." Employees feel more free to use their own judgement on the job, as demonstrated by a mean of 4.22, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.86194. News directors' mean was 3.95, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.2344.

Statement 16: "When employees have complaints, they feel free to bring them to me"; "When employees have complaints, they feel free to bring them to the boss." The news directors agreed with this at a higher rate than subordinates (significant at .01 level). The management mean was 3.90, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.0712. The mean for employees was 3.22, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.2087.

Statement 17: "I have no trouble maintaining control over our on-air product"; "The boss has no trouble maintaining control over our on-air product." Overall rankings to this set of statements were about equal, with the news directors' mean being 3.55, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.68633. The subordinates' mean was 3.50,

indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.0622.

Statement 18: "I always know what the working climate is going to be around here, from one day to the next." The news directors agreed with this statement far more often than their employees. The news directors' mean was 3.25, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.1180. Subordinates' mean was 2.82, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.0350.

Statement 19: "TV news is, by nature, cut-throat. People who can't deal with that should get out." At the .01 level, employees were significantly more in agreement with this statement than news directors, giving it consistently higher scores. The employees' mean was 4.12, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.96576. The news directors' mean was 3.30, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.97872.

Statement 20: "My people work hard when I'm not here"; "I wonder what the boss says about me when I'm not here." Results of these statements, relating to trust in interpersonal relationships, show that news directors felt employees work hard, and employees didn't think much about what news directors might be saying about them during absences. The news directors' mean was 3.65, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.81273. Subordinates' mean was 2.55,

indicating they "somewhat disagree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.2598.

Statement 21: "Employees of this company are promptly informed of new plans and developments." News directors perceived significantly better (.01) organizational communication than subordinates. Their mean was 3.30, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.0809. Subordinates' mean was 2.55, indicating they "somewhat disagree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.1082.

Statement 22: "I give my employees all the information they need about their jobs and how to do them better"; "My boss gives employees all the information they need about their jobs and how to do them better." Again, news directors perceived significantly better (.01) inter-organizational communication that subordinates did. The news directors' mean was 4.50, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.94451. Subordinates' mean was 2.72, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.1980.

Statement 23: "Employees here can be confident of keeping their jobs, as long as they do good work"; "I can be confident of keeping my job, as long as I do good work." News directors felt more secure on the job than employees did. Their mean was 4.00, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.0761, compared to subordinates' mean of 3.87,

indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.0175.

Statement 24: "There are unpleasant aspects of the newsroom environment which keep me from doing my best work." News directors perceived significantly, more impact of organizational climate on their work ability than subordinates did (.01). News directors' mean was 3.70, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.2607. Subordinates' mean was 3.07, indicating they "agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 1.0715.

Statement 25: "Considering everything, I am satisfied with my job at the present time." Results of the overall job satisfaction responses show subordinates appeared much happier in the newsroom than news directors. News directors mean response was 3.95, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.88704. Employees' mean response was 4.02, indicating they "somewhat agree" with the statement. Standard deviation was 0.89120.

Statement 26: "Looking back over the past 36 months, the combined audience for our news program has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same." This statement was offered to news directors only. Eighty-five percent said their overall audience had increased. Fifteen percent said it had stayed about the same. No news director reported a decline.

The questions offered to survey participants, and the responses obtained from those participants, have been described.

In chapter four, the author will put the results in context showing how managers and employees differ in their perceptions of the newsroom environment and their actions within it.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter begins with an interpretation of the results obtained from evaluation of the survey responses. It continues with a discussion of the comments offered by survey participants, and suggestions for further research.

The primary purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent to which managers in local television newsrooms in the southwestern United States would report their use of negative reinforcement as a management strategy in their newsrooms. The study was also aimed at determining the extent to which these news directors and their subordinates perceived the organizational climate (created in part as the result of the use of negative reinforcement) as a possible hindrance to their job performance. The first hypotheses is:

> There is no significant difference between TV news employees and managers in the southwestern U. S. in the way they perceive negative reinforcement as a factor in organizational climate in their newsrooms.

The survey instrument for news directors employed six statements to gauge the extent to which news directors would report using negative reinforcement to help establish organizational climate. These statements were:

3. This is a TV newsroom--not a place for an unprepared employee to get a "learning experience.

4. My employees are paid to do their best possible work, so I don't over-do it with praise.

5. When I want something done a certain way, I need not explain why because I am the boss.

8. When an employee behaves in an unacceptable manner, it's ok to "call them on the carpet" in front of others so those behaviors won't be repeated by anyone.

18. I always know what the working "climate" is going to be around here, from one day to the next.

19. TV news is, by nature, cut-throat. People who can't deal with that should get out.

Fifty-five percent of the news directors agreed with statement 3, indicating their expectation that employees behave in certain, predictable ways. This reflects news directors' use of negative reinforcement, in that they feel employees should not have to be told what to do, even in unfamiliar situations. Employees agreed that the newsroom was no place for a "learning experience", but the employees' mean was lower.

News directors' mean response for statement 4 was the lowest for any statement posed to them. Evidently, they feel praise is important. But even though news directors responded that praise is important, employees did not perceive much praise in their environment. Employees' mean response to this statement was significantly lower (at the .01 level of significance) than that of news directors. Fifteen percent of news directors responded in the affirmative to statement 4, indicating they do <u>not</u> perceive praise as important in the work environment. Since the negative reinforcement environment is one in which praise or

other recognition of employees' correct occupational behaviors is not widely used, the responses to this statement would indicate negative reinforcement is used in the respondents' newsrooms.

Significant differences at the .01 level were recorded for news director and employee responses to statement 5. News directors reported their belief that they are "the boss" and not required to explain to employees how or why something should be done. This, again, is an element of negative reinforcement because it limits communication of goals and objectives. Employees perceive this attitude on the part of news directors at a significantly higher level than that of news directors.

In response to statement 8, which profiles a distinctly proactive negative reinforcement behavior, responses by news directors and subordinates differed slightly. News directors reported that they "somewhat disagree" with using the strategy, of "calling (an employee) on the carpet." Employees said they perceived news directors to "somewhat agree" with this strategy.

News directors' and subordinates' responses to statement 18 differed significantly at the .05 level. News directors were far more sure of what the day-to-day work climate would be like than their employees. Admittedly, every day will be different in the TV newsroom. Some are more busy and stressful than others. Still, management should instill an underlying confidence--which respondents to this statement indicated is lacking. This suggests negative reinforcement in effect. Employees don't know

from one day to the next what kind of organizational climate they will encounter.

The responses to the final negative reinforcement statement were also significantly different at the .05 level. In answering statement 19, employees were by far more inclined to report TV news as a "cut-throat" business than their bosses were. This would indicate, again, that employees do not know what to expect from one day to the next. Perhaps they feel uncertainty about their future. At the very least, their responses indicate a feeling that the business is not fair to those who work in it. A number of things may be to blame for this; still, the responses indicate employees perceive significantly more threat to their personal security, and more negative reinforcement, in the environment than their bosses do.

The statements correlating to negative reinforcement were grouped together, and responses analyzed, to test hypothesis 1. From the responses it is clear that there is a significant difference between TV news employees' and managers' perceptions of negative reinforcement as a factor in their newsrooms. The literature has shown that negative reinforcement can come from a number of sources, and not always directly from overt behaviors of the manager. Company policies discouraging communication of goals, lack of support from peers and subordinates, and environmental stimuli are some other possible sources for negative reinforcement. But the hypothesis does not concern itself with where the negative reinforcement stems from--only

that is does exist. The findings substantiate without a doubt that it does.

The second hypothesis is:

> There is no relationship between these TV news employees' and managers' perceptions of negative reinforcement and perceptions of organizational climate.

It has already been demonstrated that employees perceive far more negative reinforcement in use to establish organizational climate than that reported by news directors. When the employees' response to statements dealing specifically with organizational climate are looked at in light of these negative reinforcement findings, it is clear that there is a connection between the two. In responding as they did to statements 10, 12, and 13, employees indicated that they perceive more stress in the work environment, less nurturing of interpersonal relationships, and more harboring of lagging "problems and conflicts" which are not taken to management. By answering statement 16 as they did, employees indicated that they (for whatever reason) do not feel comfortable taking problems and complaints to the boss for quick action. In answering statement 21 as they did, employees indicated they are not well informed of new plans and developments. Employees obviously perceive the organization climate as a far less pleasant, far more conflict-filled place where they do not always know what is going to happen next. The negative reinforcement which employees confirmed in their responses to statements 3, 4, 5, 8, 18, and 19, shows up again--only this time as an overtly-demonstrated element of

organizational climate (as indicated by responses to statements 10, 12, 13, 16, and 21).

The final hypothesis is:

> There is no relationship between TV news employees' and managers' perceptions of organizational climate and perceptions of personal ability to perform on the job.

The findings of the research do not allow for rejection of this hypothesis. Although the findings do show that subordinates are less pleased with the environment in which they work, they did not report less ability to do "best" work within that environment than news directors did. In fact, the news directors responses in this regard (statement 24) are significantly higher than subordinates, in that news directors perceived far less ability to do their "best" work. Because a relationship between perceptions of poor organizational climate and perceptions of inability to do "best" work could not be established for any one group of test subjects, hypothesis three can not be rejected.

Comments

During the course of the survey, the author transcribed any substantive comments the participants had in regard to the survey or their overall perception of the working environment. These comments illustrate some of the challenges news directors and employees face.

Financial hard times were mentioned by one Utah news director who said that his station was going through "very tough (economic) times right now" and that staff and funding cutbacks were common. One Arizona news director mentioned "upper

management conflicts" which were present and affecting staff morale. Another Arizona news director, after completing the survey, reported that his station was so financially strapped that it had been "kicked off the cable system" and "locked out" of station offices for non-payment of rent. That same news director claimed that agents of the Internal Revenue Service had "seized" the station's accounts earlier in the day, and that "all the paychecks have bounced." Later, when the author called back to obtain survey responses from subordinate personnel, the news director stated that all subordinates had quit--and that he, too, was on his way out of the station for the last time.

These comments would indicate that even the men and women who are supposedly 'in control' of the newsroom have problems beyond their control. This would certainly add an additional stress factor to what news directors have already portrayed as an environment which is not always conducive to doing the "best" work they feel capable of.

Other statements were included on the survey instrument to get a feel for ancillary concerns of TV news managers and employees in their working environments. Forty percent of news directors said they have average or greater than average trouble "maintaining control" over the on-air product. One in four news directors had average or lesser than average agreement with the statement, "I am proud to work for this company."

The responses to these statements could reflect news directors' feelings that budget and staff cutting has reached the

point where control over product in the production process is being lost. The responses could also indicate that the news directors feel their companies are more concerned with profitability than with people--thus the finding that they are not necessarily proud to be associated with the firm.

Eighty-five percent of the news directors reported audience increases over the past 36 months, while 15% said their audience had remained about the same size. It would be interesting to verify these claims by news directors with actual ratings summaries--to see if the rating claims are true, or just wishful thinking. (Ratings summaries for the major ratings services must be purchased at an enormous cost; consequently they were not obtained by the author.) The statement to news directors in regard to ratings was asked mainly to see if news directors, when reporting unhappiness with the organizations in which they worked, would also report unhappiness with program ratings effectiveness. They did not.

Many subordinates reported--through their comments--a great deal of frustration on the job, but no one admitted not liking work in the TV business. Several did complain of not enjoying work in the organizations where they were employed. As with news directors, financial concerns were on the minds of many subordinates. Employees of one New Mexico station complained of staffers being laid off in a "bloodletting" on the day of the survey. The producer at this station was already heavily involved in photography assignments and, as a result of the

layoffs, would have to take on still more duties. "I don't know how I'm going to be able to do it all," he remarked. An employee at one Utah station, considered by many to be a landmark broadcaster in the western United States, said his station was beset with an "unstable work environment" that affected nearly everyone in the news department. Another Utah station employee said his news department had a "serious communication problem" among staff members and was "borderline dysfunctional."

Limitations

The survey was somewhat limited by the fact that the author was not able to locate a survey instrument designed specifically for recording perceptions of negative reinforcement. There was no established and verified list of questions to replicate specifically for this survey's purpose.

The research effort was limited by the fact that so few news directors, only about half of the population of qualified news directors in this small part of the TV "world", could be reached by telephone for participation. The author is not certain that any other form of contact would be more successful, since news directors are flooded with mail, telegrams, and FAX correspondence. In this survey, two news directors asked to respond by mail, and only one of these responses was returned promptly.

The use of subordinates was contingent upon participation by their news directors, and consequently, the number of potential subordinate responses declined with each successive failure to contact a news director. The author was pleased with the overall response rate from subordinates, though he would have liked to have seen more input from photographers.

Doing data collection by phone is, in itself, limiting--in that the data collector never knows if he has really gotten the full attention of the respondent. For that matter, it can not be verified if the person who purported to be the respondent sought was actually that person. (In the case of one Colorado TV station, for example, two men claimed to be "the news director." Neither one ended up being willing to answer the survey, however.)

The telephone survey could have been expanded--had the author had more financial resources and time at his disposal. But the limitation of thesis completion time during the summer session, and the personal expense of mid-day interstate long distance phone calls limited each number of potential contacts per individual to five and limited the time of survey to one week.

To an extent, also, a limitation existed in that the author did not enter into this research with a completely unbiased outlook. He had seen negative reinforcement in use in TV news before; he expected to verify it through his research. However he thinks that--in this regard--no researcher can be truly

"unbiased." We all engage in research because we think it will confirm certain expectations of how things are, or should be, or will be. As human beings, we each bring a different background and perspective to each task in which we become engaged. It would be impossible for us to be "unbiased" in any endeavor.

Also, as pointed out earlier, negative reinforcement itself is a very slippery subject to pin down. It can come from a number of sources (not always from the boss) and can make itself evident in a number of ways. Not all employees react to it at the same level. Not all employees make the perceptual connection between negative reinforcement and their understanding of job quality. One can only hope, when engaging in research such as this, that one finds overwhelming indicators pointing to negative reinforcement--to know that it most likely does exist in the environment where one is looking.

Future Directions for Research

The author believes that the attitudes and opinions of management and subordinates in TV newsrooms in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah in regard to negative reinforcement, work climate, and perception of personal job ability are accurately represented. He does not know whether the findings would be consistent with the attitudes and opinions of TV news employees in other states. He does feel, though, that further, more wide-scale research is needed to look at these issues.

Assuming that this future research confirms the existence of negative reinforcement in the local TV newsrooms nationally--as it has been confirmed here in the southwestern United States--the next logical step is to look at a possible association between the use of negative reinforcement by news directors and program ratings effectiveness change. Individual, high negative reinforcement newsrooms could be determined, and their ratings examined. Depending upon the extent to which other variables in the ratings "mix" could be isolated, this could lead to a determination of whether the use of negative reinforcement is an identifiable variable in program ratings stagnation or decline.

Conclusion

The survey of news directors and subordinates in TV stations in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah has confirmed that negative reinforcement is widely used by news directors and perceived by employees. Regardless of how much weight is given to this influence in the mix of elements which form organizational climate, both management and subordinates surveyed for this research said that there <u>were</u> elements present in their own organizational climate which prevented them from doing their "best" work. Management and subordinates reported different perceptions of what organizational climate is like.

In order for there to be effective communication of ideas within the TV news organization, the people working within it

must have effective interpersonal relationships. In this survey, it was found that news directors perceived stronger interpersonal relationships than subordinates. News directors also gave higher rankings to adequacy of communication within the organization than subordinates did. This would indicate trouble within the ranks--trouble which is not perceived by news directors, who consistently indicated greater satisfaction with organizational climate than employees did. It would indicate employees may feel isolated, and may be developing a hostile, 'we vs. them' perception--but that these feelings are not being recognized and dealt with by management. The opportunity for misunderstanding--leading to workplace mistakes and errors--is present. In order that this does not affect external organizational communication, steps must be taken to unify employees and management in their perceptions of and expectations for work. This is a task for both management and subordinates.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Random-Order Listing of Television Stations
Which Met Survey Criterea, May 30--June 4, 1991

Arizona

CALL	CITY	AFF	CHL	ADI RANK
KMOH	Kingman	NBC	6	20th
KOLD	Tucson	CBS	13	79th
KTVK	Phoenix	ABC	3	20th
KYMA	Yuma	ABC	11	178th
KNAZ	Flagstaff	NBC	2	202nd
KPHO	Phoenix	IND	5	20th
KGUN	Tucson	ABC	9	79th
KTVW	Phoenix	IND	33	20th
KUAT	Tucson	PBS	6	79th
KVOA	Tucson	NBC	4	79th
KAET	Phoenix	PBS	8	20th
KPOL	Tucson	IND	40	79th
KYEL	Yuma	NBC	13	178th
KTSP	Phoenix	CBS	10	20th
KUAS	Tucson	PBS	27	79th

Colorado

CALL	CITY	AFF	CHL	ADI RANK
KREZ	Durango	CBS/NBC	6	180th
KRDO	Col. Spgs.	ABC	13	99th
KREX	Grd. Junct.	CBS/NBC	5	180th
KUSA	Denver	ABC	9	19th
KWGN	Denver	IND	2	19th
KOAA	Col. Spgs.	NBC	5	99th
KCNC	Denver	NBC	4	19th
KTVS	Sterling	CBS/ABC	3	189th

New Mexico

CALL	CITY	AFF	CHL	ADI RANK
KZIA	Las Cruces	IND	48	104th
KENW	Portales	PBS	3	150th
KRWG	Las Cruces	PBS	22	104th
KLUZ	Albuquerque	IND	41	51st
KOAT	Albuquerque	ABC	7	51st
KNME	Albuquerque	PBS	5	51st
KOB	Albuquerque	NBC	4	51st
KBIM	Roswell	CBS	10	51st
KOBF	Farmington	NBC	12	51st
KGCM	Albuquerque	CBS	13	51st
KOBR	Roswell	NBC	8	51st

Utah

CALL	CITY	AFF	CHL	ADI RANK
KUED	St. Lake City	PBS	7	41st
KSL	St. Lake City	CBS	5	41st
KULC	Ogden	PBS	9	41st
KUTV	St. Lake City	NBC	2	41st
KBYU	Provo	PBS	11	41st
KTVX	St. Lake City	ABC	4	41st

USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE
EASTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY
INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: Mr. Doo Swanson

FROM: Dr. Anthony B. Schroeder ABS

DATE: 29 Mav. 1991

PROJECT: The Use of Negative Reinforcement as a Management Tool in Television Newsrooms in New Mexico.

ADVISOR: Dr. T. Ashmore

This memo is to confirm verbal approval of Mav 28. Your project has been approved by the committee, with the assurance that confidentiality of the results are guaranteed. Remember all funding sources require prior approval from the Use of Human Subjects Committee.

cc: Sharon King

APPENDIX B

[Management]

Indicate [circle] the appropriate response to each statement:

5 = HIGHLY AGREE
4 = SOMEWHAT AGREE
3 = AGREE
2 = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
1 = HIGHLY DISAGREE

1. I know how my job fits in with other work in this organization.	5	4	3	2	1
2. It's important to involve staff in discussion of our department's goals; their input is valuable.	5	4	3	2	1
3. This is a TV newsroom - not a place for an unprepared employee to get a "learning experience".	5	4	3	2	1
4. My employees are paid to do their best possible work, so I don't over-do it with praise.	5	4	3	2	1
5. When I want something done a certain way, I do not need to explain why because I am the boss.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Employees expectations of my work are fair.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I get very lots of attention from my employees for my work.	5	4	3	2	1
8. When an employee behaves in an unacceptable manner, it's ok to "call them on the carpet" in front of others so those behaviors won't be repeated by anyone.	5	4	3	2	1
9. My employees are friendly toward me.	5	4	3	2	1
10. The working environment here is pleasant and stress-free.	5	4	3	2	1
11. I am proud to work for this company.	5	4	3	2	1

12. The people I work with all get along well.	5	4	3	2	1
13. Employees bring their problems and conflicts to me so I can deal with them promptly.	5	4	3	2	1
14. My department functions as a "team".	5	4	3	2	1
15. I have lots of freedom on the job to use my own judgement.	5	4	3	2	1
16. When employees have complaints, they feel free to bring them to me.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I have no trouble maintaining control over our on-air product.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I always know what the working "climate" is going to be around here, from one day to the next.	5	4	3	2	1
19. TV news is, by nature, cut-throat. People who can't deal with that should get out.	5	4	3	2	1
20. My people work hard when I'm not here.	5	4	3	2	1
21. Employees of this company are promptly informed of new plans and developments.	5	4	3	2	1
22. I give my employees all the information they need about their jobs and how to do them better.	5	4	3	2	1
23. Employees here can be confident of keeping their jobs, as long as they do good work.	5	4	3	2	1
24. There are unpleasant aspects of the newsroom environment which keep me from doing my best work.	5	4	3	2	1
25. Considering everything, I am satisfied with my job at the present time.	5	4	3	2	1

26. Looking back over the past 36 months, the combined audience for our news program has:

_____Increased
_____Decreased
_____Remained about the same size

APPENDIX C

[Staff]

Indicate [circle] the appropriate response to each statement:

5 = HIGHLY AGREE
4 = SOMEWHAT AGREE
3 = AGREE
2 = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
1 = HIGHLY DISAGREE

1. I know how my job fits in with other work in this organization.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I am involved in discussion of our department's goals; my input is valuable.	5	4	3	2	1
3. This is a TV newsroom, not a place for an unprepared employee to get a "learning experience".	5	4	3	2	1
4. I am paid to do my best possible work, so my boss doesn't over-do it with praise.	5	4	3	2	1
5. When my boss wants something done a certain way, it's my job to do it that way without question.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Management's expectation of my work is fair.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I get lots of attention from from my boss for my work.	5	4	3	2	1
8. When an employee is behaving in an unacceptable manner, the boss will "call them on the carpet" in front of others so those kinds of behaviors won't be repeated by anyone.	5	4	3	2	1
9. My boss is friendly toward me.	5	4	3	2	1
10. The working environment here is pleasant and stress-free.	5	4	3	2	1
11. I'm proud to work for this company.	5	4	3	2	1
12. The people I work with all get along well.	5	4	3	2	1

13. Employees bring their problems and conflicts to the boss so they can be dealt with promptly.	5	4	3	2	1
14. My department functions as a "team".	5	4	3	2	1
15. I have lots of freedom on the job to use my own judgement.	5	4	3	2	1
16. When employees have complaints, they feel free to bring them to the boss.	5	4	3	2	1
17. The boss has no trouble maintaining control over the on-air product.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I always know what the working "climate" is going to be around here, from one day to the next.	5	4	3	2	1
19. TV news is, by nature, cut-throat. People who can't deal with that should get out.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I wonder what the boss says about me when I'm not here.	5	4	3	2	1
21. Employees of this company are promptly informed of new plans and developments.	5	4	3	2	1
22. My boss gives employees all the information they need about their jobs and how to them better.	5	4	3	2	1
23. I can be confident of keeping my job, as long as I do good work.	5	4	3	2	1
24. There are unpleasant aspects of the newsroom environment which keep me from doing my best in my work.	5	4	3	2	1
25. Considering everything, I am satisfied with my job at the present time.	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX D

Script For Telephone Calls to Station News Directors

GOOD MORNING (AFTERNOON). MY NAME IS DOUG SWANSON, AND I AM A GRADUATE STUDENT AT EASTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY. THE REASON I'M CALLING IS THAT I AM DOING RESEARCH INTO LOCAL TELEVISION NEWS FOR MY MASTER'S THESIS, AND I WOULD LIKE YOU AND THREE OF YOUR DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE. DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT FOR ME TO EXPLAIN THE PROJECT?

I AM CONDUCTING A SURVEY OF TELEVISION NEWS DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES IN THE SOUTHWEST, TO SEE HOW SATISFIED THEY ARE WORKING IN THE BUSINESS. EMPLOYEES WHO WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN MY SURVEY ARE BEING ASKED TO GIVE THEIR RESPONSES TO A BRIEF LIST OF STATEMENTS ABOUT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION PATTERNS IN THE TV NEWSROOM. NO ONE WHO PARTICIPATES IS BEING IDENTIFIED BY NAME OR STATION. THE STATIONS CHOSEN FOR PARTICIPATION ARE BEING CONTACTED BY TELEPHONE IN ARIZONA, COLORADO, NEW MEXICO, AND UTAH.

I WOULD LIKE YOU AND THREE OF YOUR EMPLOYEES TO EACH TAKE ABOUT THREE MINUTES TO RESPOND TO MY QUESTIONNAIRE, IF THAT WOULD MEET WITH YOUR APPROVAL.

* * *

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION. THE ANSWERS YOU GAVE WILL BE HELD IN COMPLETE CONFIDENCE, AND YOU WILL NOT BE IDENTIFIED IN MY RESEARCH. HOWEVER, I WILL MAIL YOU AN ABSTRACT OF MY FINDINGS IN ABOUT SIX WEEKS.

Instructions for Survey Participants (Telephone)

I AM ABOUT TO READ YOU A LIST OF STATEMENTS HAVING TO DO WITH MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION IN THE TELEVISION NEWSROOM.
AS I READ EACH STATEMENT TO YOU, I WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT IT IN LIGHT OF YOUR CURRENT EXPERIENCE AT _____-TV.
AFTER I HAVE READ EACH STATEMENT, PLEASE RANK THE STATEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH HOW STRONGLY YOU AGREE WITH IT.
GIVE THE STATEMENT A RANK OF "5" IF YOU HIGHLY AGREE WITH IT; "4" IF YOU SOMEWHAT AGREE; "3" IF YOU AGREE; "2" IF YOU SOMEWHAT DISAGREE; AND RANK THE STATEMENT A "1" IF YOU HIGHLY DISAGREE.
DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AT THIS POINT? IF NOT, LET'S BEGIN:

Instructions for Management Participants (Telephone)
-- Final Ratings Perception Question

THE LAST STATEMENT I WILL READ TO YOU DOES NOT REQUIRE A RANKING RESPONSE. SIMPLY RESPOND AS INDICATED IN THE STATEMENT ITSELF:

APPENDIX E

P.O. Box 2830
Portales, NM 88130
May 30, 1991

Lisa Breeden, News Director
KOAT-TV
P.O. Box 25
Albuquerque, NM 87125

Dear Ms. Breeden:

This letter is in regard to our telephone call today having to do with my Master's thesis research into the television newsroom.

As I explained, I'm surveying news directors and selected employees in New Mexico and three other states, to determine job satisfaction in the newsroom environment. No such research has been done before.

This project has been approved by the faculty of Eastern New Mexico University. I am being advised by Drs. Tim Ashmore and Tony Schroeder.

Survey participants will not be identified by name or station.

I would very much like you and three of your employees to participate. Since KOAT is the dominant television station in New Mexico, your opinions are of special importance.

Enclosed are survey forms and stamped return envelopes. I would be most appreciative if you and your staff would complete the survey forms and return them in the mail to me no later than Wednesday so that they can be included with the other responses I've already obtained. If you should choose not to answer, please return the questionnaires anyway.

You will receive an abstract of my findings sometime in July.

I am very thankful for your understanding and cooperation,

Doug Swanson

May 30, 1991

As an employee of KOAT television news, your input is being sought as part of a research project into job satisfaction and communication patterns in the TV newsroom.

As part of my Master's degree at Eastern New Mexico University, I am surveying television news employees to see what they think about the environment in which they work. I would like you to participate, by answering the following questionnaire and returning it to me in the postage-paid envelope.

If you would like to participate, please circle the appropriate ranking for each statement on the attached questionnaire. Return it to me no later than June 5, 1991.

If you choose not to participate, return the questionnaire to me anyway.

You will NOT be identified by name or station, but your responses will help give a clearer understanding of how people relate to one another and work together in the TV newsroom. In about six weeks I will send you an abstract of the findings in this regard.

Thank you,

Doug Swanson

June 3, 1991

KTVX-TV
John Edwards, News Director
1760 Fremont Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84104

Dear Mr. Edwards:

The enclosed information is in regard to my survey of TV news employees for my Master's thesis at Eastern New Mexico University. I appreciate your willingness to take part.

Survey participants, News Directors and subordinate employees in New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona, will remain anonymous. I am surveying these individuals at random to see how satisfied they are on the job. No such survey has been done in TV news before.

Please complete the questionnaire enclosed, and return it to me in the postage-paid envelope no later than June 10. Ask the requested employee participants to do the same.

When the committee has approved my research findings, I will send you a summary of the results.

I hope my research will highlight ways in which News Directors and their subordinates can work better together in the high-stress TV news environment. I'm glad you were willing to help me in this regard.

Sincerely,

Doug Swanson

Enclosures

June 3, 1991

Please forward to _____:

The enclosed information is in regard to my survey of TV news employees for my Master's thesis at Eastern New Mexico University. I appreciate your willingness to take part.

Survey participants, News Directors and subordinate employees in New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona, will remain anonymous. I am surveying these individuals at random to see how satisfied they are on the job. No such survey has been done in TV news before.

Please complete the questionnaire enclosed, and return it to me in the postage-paid envelope no later than June 10.

When the committee has approved my research findings, I will send KTVX a summary of the results.

I hope my research will highlight ways in which News Directors and their subordinates can work better together in the high-stress TV news environment. I'm glad you were willing to help me in this regard.

Sincerely,

Doug Swanson

APPENDIX F

Response Means for Individual Statements

t-Test Results for Significance at .01 and .05

QST. #	N.D. MEAN	SUBORD. MEAN	$\bar{d}$	t	SIGNIFICANT at .01	at .05
1	4.65	4.40	.25	1.39		
2	4.70	3.65	1.05	5.83	*	
3	3.50	3.22	.28	1.56		
4	2.15	3.52	-1.37	-7.61	*	
5	2.50	3.72	-1.22	-6.78	*	
6	3.70	4.27	- .57	-3.17	*	
7	3.10	3.47	- .37	-2.06		**
8	2.90	3.20	- .30	-1.67		
9	4.25	4.02	.23	1.28		
10	3.65	3.17	.48	2.67		**
11	4.20	4.17	.03	.17		
12	3.90	3.12	.78	4.33	*	
13	3.45	2.87	.58	3.22	*	
14	3.75	3.77	- .02	- .11		
15	3.95	4.22	- .27	-1.50		
16	3.90	3.22	.68	3.78	*	
17	3.55	3.50	.05	.28		
18	3.25	2.82	.43	2.39		**
19	3.33	4.12	- .79	-4.39	*	
20	3.65	2.55	1.10	6.11	*	